

## Open Enrollment for Employee Health Care

The dates for changing state employee medical and dental plans are Oct. 23, 2000 through Nov. 30, 2000, and a number of ways are now available to make changes even easier.

This year, certain modifications can be made through the Health Care Authority's (HCA) web site, such as viewing current coverage for cost and content, and actually changing plans.

Some changes, such as adding family members or changing your address, will still require filling out the 2001 Medical and Dental Coverage form included in your open enrollment packet mailed to you earlier. Lost the form? Simply go to the HCA web site and you can download the form and print it out. [www.wa.gov/hca/PEBB/PEBBemployee.html](http://www.wa.gov/hca/PEBB/PEBBemployee.html)



WA Soldiers Home & Colony  
PO Box 199  
Orting, WA 98360

**John M. King**  
WDVA Director

**Jerry Towne**  
Superintendent

*Soldiers Home News is published for the staff  
and residents of the WA Soldiers Home and  
Colony*

## Veterans Day 2000 Activities

### Friday, November 10

11:00 Tahoma National Cemetery Veterans Day Ceremony (POC: 425-413-9614)

11:00 Western Washington University Veterans Day Ceremony, Concert Hall (POC: Scott Greger 360-650-6115)

### Saturday, November 11, 2000

9:00 City of Auburn Veterans Day Parade  
2:00 Auburn Elks Club - Recognition of Outstanding Veterans Award recipients. Program administered by WDVA & Governor's VAAC. (POC: Sharon LaVigne 253-931-3043) Invitation only

9:00 Olympia Veteran's Day Parade and Ceremony, Military Order of the World Wars, Tacoma Chapter (POC: Ernie Elmore 360-943-7366)

★ **10:00 Veterans Day Activities, WA Veterans Home (Auditorium) - Retsil**  
(POC: Bob Jones 360-895-4706)

10:00 Centralia Veterans Day Ceremony, George Washington Park in Centralia. Hosted by American Legion Post #17. Annual bean feed to follow at Post (POC: Jean Badavinac 360-736-7732)

11:00 Evergreen-Washelli Memorial Park, 11111 Aurora Ave. N., Seattle, WA Guest speaker Brig. Gen. Marcia Clark, USAFR (Ret.) (POC: Marylou Conrad, Event Coordinator, (206-362-5200)

1:00 - 5:00 Veterans Memorial Museum - 712 West Main St., Centralia Cake Cutting Ceremony (POC: Lee Grimes 360-330-7913)

★ **2:00 Veterans Day Activities, WA Soldiers Home & Colony - Orting, Chilson Hall**  
(POC: Lynn Zemke 360-893-4511)

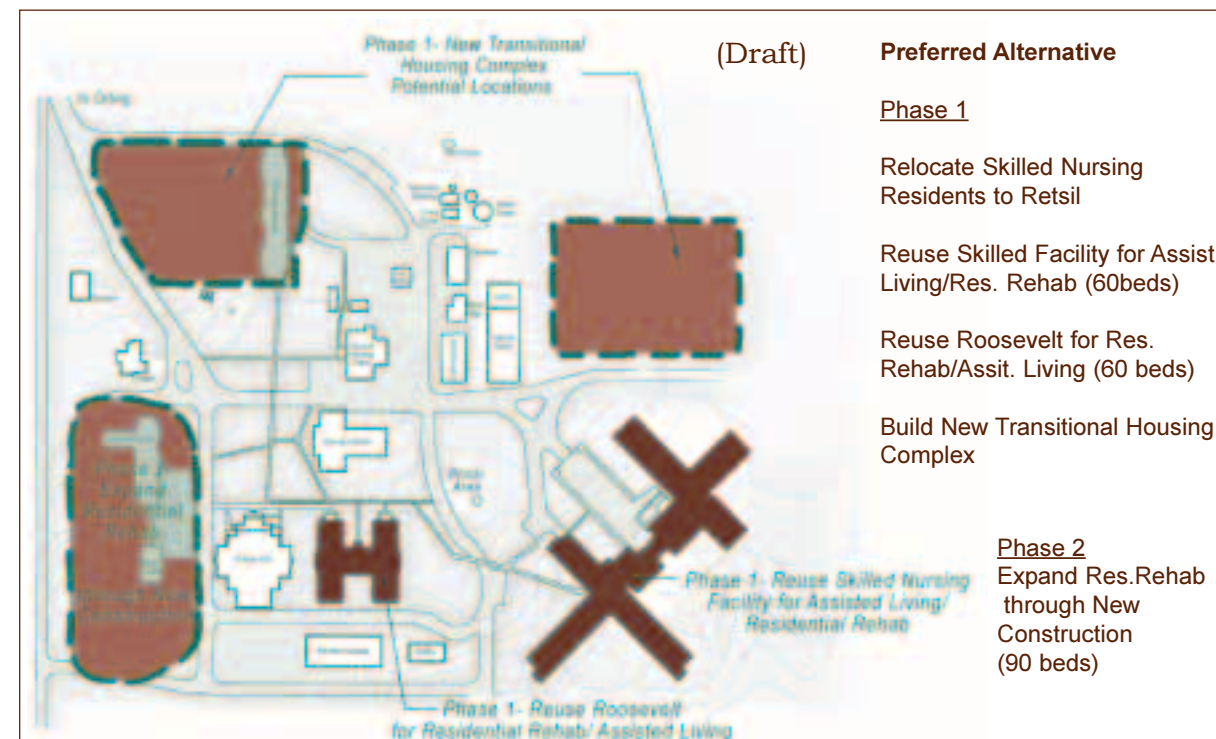
2 - 5 Veterans Day Meal, AMVETS Post 1, Meeting Hall, 5717 South Tyler St Tacoma, WA 98388 (Corner of Tyler & 56th). Residents & all veterans invited

# Home News

★  
"Serving Those  
Who Served"  
★

Washington Soldiers Home & Colony, Orting WA

## Orting to provide new, much-needed service to Vietnam-era veterans



In an effort to provide more care and treatment to the state's largest veteran population - Vietnam-era - the Soldiers Home and Colony is being considered for a comprehensive rehabilitation facility.

A 1998 Capital Planning Feasibility Study determined the current facilities could no longer support the agency's mission to provide high-quality, cost-effective, long-term care to our veterans. The study noted most buildings at the Veterans Home in Retsil and the Soldiers Home in Orting were functionally obsolete and in need of structural upgrades and improvements to meet earthquake and life-safety requirements. Based on this study, the Legislature mandated the agency explore options to address the future demands for serving our veterans, including consolidation of

skilled nursing services of the Veterans Home and Soldiers Home and Colony.

Agency Director John King says the Legislature's requirement to consolidate services - together with the need to assist homeless and Vietnam-era veterans - has driven the agency to come up with the best, most cost-effective way to provide a continuum of care to the state's veterans.

"Currently, we are providing duplicate services at two locations and the Legislature says we need to find a better way," said King. "We can offer a comprehensive rehabilitation program at Orting and focus on reintegrating our younger veterans back into the community, while combining our skilled nursing at Retsil.

"Our goal is to fill the gap of services

See Needed Service on page 3





# Exciting concept for our future

By Jerry Towne,  
Superintendent

I'll admit it. I'm excited about the proposed change in our mission at the Soldiers Home. Why? Because we can really make an

impact – an impact on a veteran population that has been underserved for too long: the Vietnam-era vets.

Are there questions that need to be answered? Yes. Do we have all the answers right now? No. But I believe the concept behind the agency's master plan is sound: Provide a continuum of care by combining skilled nursing care at Retsil and allowing Orting to provide short-term, residential rehabilitation and transitional assisted-living to our younger veteran population.

I am aware of the impacts this change in service may have on current residents and staff. This is the residents' home. This is our place of work. We work hard and care for our veteran residents. We don't want anything to happen to them ... or our co-workers. And I must tell you, there is not a single person in the entire agency who doesn't feel the same way.

Our skilled nursing residents will have the opportunity to move into a brand new, state-of-the-art facility. This means new, larger rooms, new equipment and rooms with a view. Those residents currently receiving less-than-skilled nursing care would have two options:

- 1. Residents would be carefully evaluated, have their abilities and needs assessed to determine if longer-term care would be needed; or
- 2. Enter a rehabilitative program to get them the help they need, get them back on their feet and back into the community.

We've heard from current residents that rehabilitative programs aren't currently available. We plan on changing that. We would offer employment training, vocational rehabilitation and phased work settings ranging from on-site incentive work therapy to employment in the community. Drug and alcohol treatment and counseling is also planned.

Now, what about staff? Those who wish to work in the new facility would be able to. And those wanting to stay here would be offered expanded opportunities and additional skills through retraining. Keep in mind, the department's number one goal after addressing the resident's needs, is to invest in our current staff.

I understand these brief comments won't answer all your questions but in the next few days, I'll be meeting with each of you to get your comments, concerns, questions and input.

I know change can sometimes be difficult, but be assured WDVA will continue to provide the best care for our residents and we will insist on investing in our current staff.

## WDVA Strategic Goals

- ★ Improve the quality of care and services for veterans and their families.
- ★ Continue investing in staff, and provide the tools that result in high quality services.
- ★ Maximize resources to honor the nation's debt to veterans.
- ★ Review core processes to anticipate and influence future needs.

# Soldiers Home moves front gate

A new entrance is adding a fresh approach to the Soldiers Home and Colony, providing a safer, more accessible entry.

Construction began in October and thanks to the hard work of the plant staff, the cooperation of visitors and staff using the back gate, and the patience of everyone, the Home has a new front entrance.



## Needed Service

Continued from page 1.

currently not being provided to our veterans. We know the need is there. It's our duty to meet that need."

Soldiers Home and Colony Superintendent Jerry Towne says under the current proposal, the home will offer independent and assisted living to a mostly ambulatory population needing a wide range of limited medical needs. Services will include, but are not limited to:

- Drug/alcohol treatment and counseling;
- Vocational rehabilitation;
- Employment training;
- Mental health services; and
- Phased work settings – from on-site incentive work therapy to employment in the community.

"Many of the core services to be offered would be done on site," said Towne. "And support services for those core programs would come from federal, state and local partners in the community."

"We have looked at this model in other states and found the majority of veterans participating in these types of rehabilitation programs go on to lead successful, self-sustaining lives," King added.

"We'll be offering them a hand up, as opposed to a handout."



## Old tree stump becomes a work of art

A chain saw sculpture being crafted by Bob King, owner of Bare Necessities, will be completed soon and permanently displayed on the Roosevelt back patio. The Resident Council, and many Veteran Service Organizations, raised the money to turn the remains of a tree trunk into a unique tribute to veterans.

The carving depicts an eagle on the top, the five service insignias, and various Northwest wildlife.